

what are the implications of this policy?

Scott Ritter has laid forth his allegations. The administration has responded simply with denials. And yet there are enough sources who confirm Scott Ritter's allegations to cause me to believe that the administration's denials are false, that in fact Secretary of State Albright has, in one way or another, discouraged the American inspectors from inspecting key facilities that the inspectors believe need to be inspected because of what would be revealed.

So, Mr. President, here is where we are now. After the agreement that Saddam Hussein entered into, in which he agreed to allow inspections to ensure that he did not develop the capability to pose a threat to his neighbors, part of the containment policy—as a result of that agreement, the United States had enforced for a period of years the inspection regime through UNSCOM—we are now no longer doing that in practice. It is now a charade.

The reason it is a charade is because we don't want to face the consequences of either, A, being denied the ability to engage in the inspections or, B, finding something we don't want to find, because in either event we would have to do something, and this administration is frozen into inaction in dealing with Saddam Hussein. If they can lob a few cruise missiles at a problem, as they did against the terrorist Osama bin Laden 10, 12 days ago, then they can say they have taken action.

But that is not enough in dealing with Saddam Hussein. He is more clever. He knows that we lack patience. He knows that if he defies us long enough, eventually our allies will desert us because, A, we don't have the capability anymore of keeping the coalition together and, B, the American people will get tired of the issue and no longer be willing to support the kind of military action or long-term action that would be required to oust Saddam Hussein.

The result of this is that the United States has, in fact, changed its policy with respect to Iraq without telling either the Congress or the American people. It apparently no longer intends to enforce the agreement that George Bush and his administration insisted Saddam Hussein make.

The implications for peace in the world are significant, because when Saddam Hussein has been able to build up his weapons of mass destruction to the level where he can cause significant damage, he will either do so or he will threaten to do so. At that point, his capability will cause a lot of countries in the world, especially those close neighbors who fear that kind of activity on his part, to back off of any opposition to him. His neighbors are relatively unprotected and, not believing the United States is a reliable ally to protect them, they will accede to his demands. Then, rather than having one or two countries in the Middle East that we have to contend with, we will

have one or two belligerents and a lot of neutral parties who no longer cooperate with us in restricting his activities and his aggression and his terrorism.

We need these countries in the fight against terrorism. I am very concerned that by backing off of the enforcement of the agreement against Saddam Hussein we will have permitted terrorism to further its goals in the Middle East and around the world, especially against Americans; and will have advanced the day when Iraq decides to engage in yet another form of aggression.

I think it is a sad day when not only do we see U.S. foreign policy in tatters, in shambles, with respect to a country that we know poses a threat to us, but an administration which is unwilling to come clean on its policy. I know these are harsh words, but the fact of the matter is the administration has not leveled with the American people on this problem. I believe that Scott Ritter is essentially correct in his assessment of the situation, especially the administration's decision to pull the plug on the inspections in any meaningful way. As a result, I think this matter deserves airing in the Senate, in the House, and before the American people. I expect, either as chairman of the Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Terrorism or as a member of the Intelligence Committee, I will ask the administration to explain its position. I think the Senate will probably have to take some action before we adjourn in October to ensure that this country has a strong policy with respect to one of the rogue nations of the world.

In conclusion, when discussing this in my home State of Arizona this last month, one of my friends said, "Isn't it the obligation of the President to conduct the foreign policy and shouldn't the Congress leave that to the President?" The answer is, as I said, as a general proposition, yes. But when an administration is frozen into inaction for one reason or another, whether the President is being distracted by other matters or whether it is simply too hard a problem for the administration to want to deal with, then the Senate, in its historic role as a partner in the administration of foreign affairs, needs to insert itself into the equation. To the extent we need to influence the development and execution of foreign policy in this area, the U.S. Senate will have to be involved.

I would rather the administration develop a policy and a strategy and execute it with the cooperation of the Senate, but if the administration is unwilling to do that, then the Senate will have to get involved. It is not a happy day to have to talk about this kind of thing in this way. We would much rather cooperate with the administration. I hold myself out to be willing to do that at any time and any place. But the administration has to come clean with the American people on what its

strategy really is in dealing with Iraq. Until that statement of strategy has been laid out in an honest way, the Senate is going to have to involve itself in this issue.

I hope and pray we will be able to maintain peace in the Middle East and that we will be able to contain Saddam Hussein, but it is going to require commitment and will, not just of the American people, but of the American Government. I am hoping in the next few weeks we can help develop the policy so, between the administration and the Congress and the American people, we will jointly, together, unify and be able to confront this threat to peace in the world.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. COLLINS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, I welcome back the distinguished Presiding Officer and our staff on the Senate floor and hope that you all had as enjoyable an August recess as I did.

I want to talk about three things this afternoon. The first is to express how saddened I am with the loss of a very key member of the staff of Senator KENT CONRAD and somebody whom I knew and respected quite well.

Secondly, I would like to talk about the agricultural situation in my State of South Dakota that I spent a good deal of time talking about as I was home.

And then obviously, thirdly, I would like to discuss the agenda at hand and what my expectations and hopes are for the remaining 6 weeks of this session.

TRIBUTE TO KENT HALL

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, just before Congress left for the August recess, we suffered a staggering loss in our "Capitol Hill family"—the deaths of Detective John Gibson and Officer J.J. Chestnut.

Today, as we returned to our work here, we learned that we have suffered another loss in our family.

This past Saturday morning, Kent Hall died in his sleep. Kent was chief of staff for my colleague and friend, Senator KENT CONRAD of North Dakota.

Outside of Congress, his beloved family, and his many friends, it's likely that few Americans ever heard Kent's name. But millions of Americans benefited from his years of hard and conscientious work in this body.

Kent Hall was a rare man—a Renaissance man. He held a doctorate in economics and philosophy. He loved ideas. But he also loved the nitty-gritty of politics, and policy.

And he loved this institution, this Senate. He was honored to work here. And we were honored to have him.

He first came to the Hill to work for TOM HARKIN. He joined Senator CONRAD's staff as agriculture advisor in 1987, the year Senator CONRAD came to the Senate. He later went on to serve as Senator CONRAD's legislative director and eventually as his chief of staff.

One of Kent's great passions was the federal budget. He believed America's budget should be balanced not only economically, but morally as well.

So he fought for budgets that would enable working families to share in these good economic times, budgets that would extend the benefits of this economy beyond Wall Street, to Main Street. He fought for budgets that would allow working parents to take their children to a doctor when they're sick, budgets that would enable parents to find good, affordable day care, budgets that would allow parents to send their children to good schools—and after that, to send them on to college.

Kent had a special place in his heart for people who live close to the land—farmers and ranchers and the people who grow up in the small towns of rural America.

He grew up in one of those towns: a little farm town in Iowa—population about 600. And though he left that town long ago, he still kept it close to his heart.

Farmers and people in farm towns all over America have lost a good friend, and an extraordinary advocate. We are grateful for Kent's diligent work on: disaster relief and farm-crisis relief.

And we extend our deepest sympathy to Kent's wife, Michelle, who works for Senator HARKIN and to their two small children, 4-year-old Caitlin—"Caiti"—and 2-year-old Austin, both of whom he loved even more than he loved this place.

We also offer our condolences to Kent's father, Ken, and his mother, Evelyn; his brothers, Mel and Michael; his sister Cheri; and his many nieces and nephews. Our thoughts and prayers are with them, and with all the members of the Conrad and Harkin staffs, who are feeling this loss more deeply than probably any member of the "Capitol family."

Like Detective Gibson and Officer Chestnut, Kent Hall died too young. He was only 52 years old. But his legacy will live on—in his two little children and in the ideals he believed in so passionately, and fought for so hard, and helped transform into law.

We will miss him.

THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURE CRISIS

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, in July, less than a month and a half ago, the Senate voted unanimously on a resolution to declare there is a national crisis in agriculture, that we needed to take immediate action to address it.

Following the unanimous passage of that resolution, we passed several amendments to the agricultural appro-

priations bill designed to address the problem. We passed an amendment to require mandatory price reporting for livestock. We passed a second amendment offered by the distinguished Senator from South Dakota, Senator JOHNSON, requiring the labeling of imported meat. And we passed an amendment offered by the two hard-working Senators from North Dakota to require at least a \$500 million indemnity program for victims of multiple-year disasters.

Unfortunately, we failed to pass my amendment to lift the cap on marketing loans and extend their term by 6 months—which is probably the single most effective way to address the problem of low prices and lost income among grain farmers.

Since we considered those amendments, the farm crisis has deepened very seriously. Over the past 3 weeks, as I visited with farmers and ranchers and rural businesspeople from all over South Dakota, they told me the same story. Many of them simply will not survive the coming months unless circumstances change. Unless we can bring about a better farm economy, a more stable price in most of the commodities now being grown, we will see an attrition in agriculture the likes of which we have not seen in over a decade.

Nick Nemec, a young farmer from Holabird, SD, who testified at a hearing on July 29 on the agricultural crisis, said that when prices go down, his family's everyday expenses go up proportionately. He said, "If the Consumer Price Index was up 40% in one year, there would be riots in the streets of cities all across America. Out in farm country, we just have farm auctions."

I heard that same sentiment over and over again when I was home these past few weeks. We have already seen too many auctions. Our farmers and ranchers are very concerned, frankly, about their survival.

So the circumstances, Madam President, as I report to the Senate this afternoon, are, unfortunately, in worse shape and more precarious than they were just a month and a half ago when these amendments were offered. We must find ways to address the current crisis in American agriculture.

So I put the Senate on notice this afternoon that we will again be offering our amendment to increase the loan rate, to establish some kind of a floor in agricultural grain prices, just as we have on minimum wage across this country now for generations. We need a minimum price, because if we do not have that, all of those stories and all of those concerns can only worsen. The farm auctions will become more frequent.

So I hope we can find, in as bipartisan a fashion as is humanly possible this close to an election, legislation we can all agree upon that will allow us to address the price more effectively, that will allow us to deal with the issues we began to confront in July.

We must pass and sign into law the mandatory price reporting legislation that passed in the Senate. We must pass and sign into law the labeling legislation that was passed in the Senate. We certainly must pass this indemnity legislation and sign that into law as quickly as we can.

What is missing is what will help the grain farmers. And unless we pass that minimum floor, that increase in the loan rate, there is nothing out there that can help the grain farmers to survive what is the worst disaster they have experienced in now more than 15 years.

So, Madam President, as we begin to consider what the agenda ought to be as we come back from a month in our States, I hope everyone understands and appreciates and empathizes with the circumstances confronting America's farmers. I hope that empathy will lead to a consensus about increasing the loan rate and providing the kinds of opportunities to farmers that they failed to achieve when we debated this matter just over a month ago.

THE REMAINING SENATE AGENDA

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, we have 6 weeks remaining in the Congress. Those 6 weeks will define our efforts as a Congress. And this is the last matter that I wish to raise before our colleagues this afternoon—the agenda for those remaining 6 weeks.

Time is short. Distractions are many. Needless to say, we must focus on our priorities. Our success for the entire Congress will really depend on what we achieve in the next 6 weeks. It will depend on whether we are committed to accomplishing the people's business.

What is the people's business? I think everyone understands what it is. The people's business is the business that we have before us. Appropriations bills must be completed.

The Congress' first responsibility is to ensure stable Government operations. There must not be talk of a Government shutdown. I have heard some of our Republican leaders, especially on the other side, suggest that the President may shut the Government down.

Today is the last day in August. The budget resolution was due in April. So far, neither body has delivered a budget resolution. So I call upon the Republican leadership in the House and in the Senate to do what the law requires, to do what is so essential to restore confidence, to do what really is required to set the framework for the priorities and the commitments that we must make in these next 6 weeks. I call on the Republican leadership to pass a budget resolution.

Not one single appropriations bill has gone to the President. Republican poison pills appear throughout the appropriations bills. So if there is a danger of a shutdown, we all know where it originates. But it is incumbent upon